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## ABSTRACT

Northern Michigan University (NMU) has examined its teacher education program to determine how it has addressed or might address the multicultural and global criteria established by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for accreditation of professional education units of teacher education programs. These criteria exist in four categories: teacher education curriculum, field experiences, recruitment and retention of diverse students, and recruitment and retention of diverse faculty. Because teaching multicultural and global perspectives outside of content or pedagogy can isolate and limit their influence, NMU makes efforts to integrate multicultural and global perspectives into existing courses. Field placements among ethnically diverse school populations require choosing sites at some distance from the campus. These placements must be reinforced with appropriate teaching strategies modeled by master teachers and university faculty as well as more direct methods, such as seminars, of fostering cultural sensitivity among teacher education students. Because the Upper Peninsula of Michigan has limited racial diversity, with Native Americans being the most numerically significant non-Caucasian ethnic group, a wide variety of strategies is needed to recruit and retain diverse students and faculty. (IAH)

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# Multicultural and Global Perspectives in Teacher Education

by

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### **Abstract**

This paper describes the context and content of a teacher education program's response to developing multicultural and global perspectives based upon NCATE standards and presents ideas for further developing these perspectives.



Four of the five categories in the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education's *Standards, Procedures and Policies for the Accreditation of Professional Education Units* (1987) contain specific compliance criteria concerning multicultural and/or global perspectives by which the institution's Professional Education Unit will be evaluated.

Category I states that the "curriculum for professional studies component(s) incorporates multicultural and global perspectives" (p. 40). Category II, The Relationship to the World of Practice, indicates that education students should participate in culturally diverse field based and/or clinical settings. NCATE's Category III, Students, states that applicants should be recruited from diverse backgrounds with participation of under represented groups encouraged. Category IV requirements stipulate that the faculty should represent cultural diversity (NCATE, 1987).

NCATE defines a multicultural perspective as "a recognition of (1) the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters and (2) the importance of culture, race, sex and gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and exceptionalities in the education process" (NCATE, 1987, p. 57). A global perspective is "the recognition of the interdependence of nations and peoples and the interlinking political, economic, and social problems of a transnational and global character" (p. 55).

NCATE's Elementary Education Task Force has also developed guidelines for elementary education programs that address the multicultural and global perspectives (September, 1989). Among the guidelines are several statements concerning the teacher candidates' understanding and ability to deal with students of different cultural and language backgrounds. For example,

The teacher candidates should understand the unique learning characteristics, learning needs and capacities of students of different ages, of different cultural and language backgrounds, and with exceptionalities. Prospective teachers should understand the development of appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies for meeting the needs of students with diverse characteristics (e.g., skills in teaching English as a second language).

Elementary school teachers must honor the dignity and rights of every individual learner consonant with the nature of our democratic and pluralistic society. Thus, programs should be developed from a multicultural perspective. (NCATE Elementary Education Task Force, 1989, p. 236)

The guidelines further state that elementary education students should study and apply current research about teaching and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse populations, have clinical and field experiences with students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and have experiences "in identifying stereotypes (e.g., cultural, gender, age, etc.) in curriculum materials and adapting instruction appropriately" (p. 245).

Northern Michigan University (NMU) has examined its present teacher



education program to determine how it has addressed and might address the multicultural and global criteria for the four NCATE categories.

### **Teacher Education Curriculum**

NCATE's Category I, Knowledge Bases for Professional Education, requires the incorporation of multicultural and global perspectives. The question is how to best incorporate these perspectives into the teacher education curriculum so that the students develop them and pass them on to their students when they become teachers.

NMU does not limit its multicultural and global perspectives to one course in the professional studies component. According to a survey of the professors teaching NMU's professional education sequence, its education program embeds these perspectives in the curriculum and addresses them throughout the program. For example, students in foundations courses address multicultural perspectives in relation to schools as institutions. Two major purposes are to extend awareness of the complex forces that shape the structure and policies of schooling in a pluralistic society and to promote understanding of the responsibilities, freedom, risks and constraints that accompany effective teaching in the context of American pluralism by presenting the historical, philosophical, and legal dimensions of American education. Besides the professional studies requirements, each student of the university must complete at least one of a select list of world cultures courses in order to graduate.

NMU believes that integrating multicultural and global perspectives into existing course is the best approach because teaching multicultural and global perspectives outside of content or pedagogy can isolate and limit their influence. No new courses in multicultural/global education are needed if it is built into existing courses. A separate course is justified and can enhance the development of such perspectives, but attempts should be made to see that they are also presented throughout the curriculum. NMU also offers a one credit elective field-based course in multicultural education to give students the opportunity to have a more focussed and concentrated multicultural learning experience.

Many state education agencies require multicultural and human relations courses for teacher certification, while other states have multicultural teacher preparation requirements that are outside of certification (Sherritt, 1990). Wisconsin teacher certification rules have exemplary statements regarding the development of multicultural perspectives.

**HUMAN RELATIONS, EFFECTIVE July 1, 1992.** An applicant who completes an initial professional education program on or after July 1, 1992, shall have completed human relations preparation, which includes all of the following:

- (a) Theory and application of human relations practices, including skill building activities in identifying and constructively responding to expressions or acts which devalue other persons.
- (b) History, culture, customs, social institutions, values, lifestyles, and contributions of women and various racial, cultural, and economic groups in the United States.
- (c) Constitutional and legal bases related to the status of



women and various racial and cultural groups in the United States.

(d) Psychological and social implications of the forces of discrimination, especially racism and sexism, and their broader impact on relationships among members of various groups in the United States.

(e) Philosophical and psychological bases of the development and change of attitudes.

(f) Evaluation of the impact of the forces of discrimination, especially racism and sexism, on language, instructional materials, learning activities, learning styles, interaction between staff and pupils, tests and measurement, and school environments; and assessment and if necessary, modifications of curriculum to assure multicultural and nonsexist content.

(g) Professionally-related direct involvement with adult and pupil members of a group whose background the student does not share, including at least one of the following designated ethnic minority groups: African-Americans, Alaskan-Americans, American Indians, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Pacific Islander Americans and foreign persons of color; and with disabled persons; and with various economic groups, including low income. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1989, p. 21-22)

The professional education program should include the above and engender sensitivity to cultural diversity and global issues. For example, foundations of education and human growth and development courses need to emphasize how differences in cultures and values can affect student learning. Students must be taught how to recognize, accept the differences and value the diversity. Specific courses in the history of diverse cultures in education and thought need to be identified and required of all education students. In short, the Wisconsin certification human relations requirements are an excellent example of what should be included in a professional education program.

Methods courses should add to the multicultural knowledge base, present the latest research and explain how to recognize and adapt to different learning styles, promote active learning, implement teaching models appropriate for all groups, use supplementary materials and activities to make classrooms more multicultural, and continually analyze the strengths and weaknesses of one's own teaching.

### **Field Experiences**

NCATE specifies in Category II "Education students participate in field-based and/or clinical experiences with culturally diverse and exceptional populations" (p. 41). Teacher education institutions should use these experiences to enhance multicultural and global perspectives and apply the knowledge from liberal studies, pre-methods and methods course. Sites should be identified where education students can work in a positive multicultural setting with culturally diverse students, staff and faculty. A recent survey found preparing teachers for multicultural settings was an important condition that is not being currently met by teacher education institutions (Buttery, Haberman, &



Houston, 1990). This is often difficult as most of these institutions in the United States are located in regions with limited diversity.

NMU is located in such an area. It has no urban centers, a widely dispersed population, and high poverty and unemployment levels. Early field-based placements are made predominately near the university and are limited to the diversity of the area. In spite of these limitations, the cultural and economic diversity of the area provides NMU students with a rich exposure to teachers and students of several distinct ethnic and social economic groups. Notable ethnic groups are Native Americans and several first or second generation European Americans (Finns, Italians, French, etc.) who have retained their ethnic identity.

African American and Hispanic students are few and not readily visible in most schools. However, the university can make student teaching assignments in locations that have more diversity. Green Bay, Wisconsin, an urban area over 180 miles from NMU, is used for student teaching placement and the diversity there is representative of any large urban area. The nearby Gwinn School system draws the majority of its students from K.I. Sawyer Air Base, which has an African American population. Escanaba, Baraga, Brimley, L'Anse and Sault Ste. Marie have substantial Native American populations and are used for student teaching placements, even though some of them are over 160 miles from the NMU campus.

It is not enough to place students in culturally diverse settings; appropriate teaching strategies should be modeled at these sites by master teachers and university faculty. Preparation and indoctrination of teacher education students into teaching must be such that they will not lose the idealism, commitment and good practices associated with a multicultural and global perspective. Teachers are often socialized into the established school systems, adopting the attitudes, behaviors and standards of that institution. Efforts must be undertaken to select and use clinical sites to help students develop and maintain good perspectives and practices. Reflective journals of classroom observations and experience may be kept to help develop and maintain successful strategies and practices. Mentoring culturally diverse students can be combined with seminars to develop a cultural sensitivity in teacher education students that can withstand the pressures they may encounter when they begin teaching.

#### **Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Students**

"Applicants from diverse economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds are recruited" (p. 44) is another NCATE criteria. This can be particularly challenging in an area that is limited in any of these categories. Northern Michigan University is especially limited in racial diversity, with Native Americans being the only significant non-Caucasian population in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Because the university is located in an area characterized by poverty and ethnic diversity, we have little trouble recruiting students of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. Seventy percent of the approximately 8700 students at NMU come from the this region.

African Americans and Native Americans each comprise approximately two percent of the student body. Hispanics and Asian Americans account for



about one percent of the students. The percentage of each of these groups at NMU is significantly higher than their percentage in the region, with the exception of Native Americans who have a slightly higher percentage representation (three percent) in the Upper Peninsula. NMU does have a higher percentage of full-time students who are Native American than any other Michigan college or university.

Because this region has limited racial diversity, students from diverse racial backgrounds need to be recruited to NMU through a wide variety of recruitment strategies. These strategies are carried out primarily by the Admissions and Financial Aid staff. They include college nights, mail recruitment campaigns, high school visits and open houses throughout the state of Michigan and target areas outside of Michigan. In order to access and communicate with prospective students in lower Michigan more effectively, three of the admissions staff members are located in centers in lower Michigan that have large African American, Asian American and Hispanic populations. A campus visit program offers free room and board for prospective students and their families as a strategy to attract students from outside the immediate area.

In addition, special efforts are made to identify and attract students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds by the staff of the Multicultural Affairs Office. Counselors visit high schools, community colleges, churches, and Indian reservations in the Upper Peninsula, lower Michigan, and several out-of-state cities to recruit diverse students to Northern Michigan University and the Teacher Education Program.

This spring the Multicultural Affairs office and the Department of Education will co-sponsor an on-campus visitation for Native American students from the Upper Peninsula. High school juniors and seniors will stay on campus overnight and meet with Department of Education faculty members and Native American students enrolled in the Teacher Education Program. They will also attend education class sessions.

These efforts are further supported by the recent adoption of the following major goal in the strategic plan of the University.

Northern Michigan University will strengthen efforts to diversify the student body, faculty, and staff. By Fall Semester, 1995, collective enrollment of disabled, international and minority students will be increased by 100 percent, while out of state enrollment will be increased by 50 percent. This will be accomplished through an emphasis on recruitment, and improved retention and graduation rates. (Northern Michigan University, 1990, p. 9)

The rationale for this goal are:

- A. Given the developing demographic picture of a pluralistic society, students must be prepared to live, work and lead in that society.
- B. The University has a leadership role in play in the region and must lead the way in assuring that diverse people are treated with respect.
- C. A hospitable community, sensitive to and welcoming of



- diversity will be more conducive to attracting and retaining diverse students and employees.
- D. A cohort of minority faculty/staff is a prerequisite for many prospective students to come and to stay.
  - E. Help graduate a larger number of minorities and attract a larger number of diverse faculty, staff, and students.
  - F. Accreditation agencies are increasing requirements for diversity.
  - G. In the Upper Peninsula, a unique opportunity exists to serve the needs of a regional minority population. Much effort has been given to surveying their needs and desires with few results. As an educational leader, NMU has a responsibility to assist its Native American population to meet its educational needs (in their own environment). Effort must be made to have educational efforts occur where these population exist in order to encourage their interest in NMU for higher education.
- (Northern Michigan University, 1990, p. 9)

Other goals and implementation ideas have been developed to increase cultural diversity at NMU by various committees. As these rationale, goals and ideas indicate, attracting students from diverse backgrounds is a challenge second only to retaining them once they have enrolled. After students are recruited, some special efforts must be made to see that they continue and complete their education at the university. The problems of retaining a diverse student population have been discussed at length and are major concerns of universities and teacher education programs. The failure of the university community to accept and support diverse student needs on campus is the primary reason students leave.

Other ways to improve the retention of under-represented students is to align the curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse student population, develop a support or mentoring system for diverse students, foster an atmosphere throughout the university that values and supports diversity, and integrate culturally diverse students into all aspects of the university. Changes will be required in the way the university community sees, feels about and behaves toward students of different cultural backgrounds if these ideas are to be effective.

Faculty need to build on the entry level characteristics of students and validate their cultural identity in order to give them the best chance for success. Experiences that are part of students schema or immediate past experience can be more easily built upon (Gilliland, 1983). Universities need to recognize how both cultural differences and learning styles impact on a student's ability to learn and use language.

Understanding the students' "home culture" is vital for understanding basic aspects of their behavior both in and out of the classroom, including language related behaviors. Any group has philosophical values which are cherished beliefs that are not questioned, but taken as absolutes for governing behavior. Different cultures have varying standards of what is and is not acceptable or respectful behavior. Silence, talking, touching, smiling, eye



contact, and competition are but a few. Teachers need to recognize these differences in values and standards, accept them as assets and value them.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty**

NCATE also expects that the "composition of the faculty represents cultural diversity" (p. 47). The recruitment and retention of culturally diverse faculty on university campuses is becoming increasingly difficult as the number of qualified candidates decreases (Collins, 1990).

The NMU teacher education faculty represent cultural diversities in religion, socio-economic status, regionalism, gender, ethnicity, and age. The majority of the teacher education faculty appointed since 1984 possess significant professional experience with cultural and racial diversity, however, actual racial diversity is minimal in the faculty of both the Education Unit and the University in general.

In order to address the situation to some extent, the University participated with matching funds in the state sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr.-Cesar Chavez-Rosa Parks visiting professor program which brings Native American, African American and Hispanic professors to campus on a limited basis. Over the past three years, departments within the education unit have hosted these visiting faculty, particularly in summer sessions. In addition, extensive recruiting from a very limited pool of racially diverse qualified candidates continues with each faculty opening.

A major goal in the 1990 strategic plan of the University is "the number of disabled, minority, and international faculty members and staff will increase by 200 percent" by fall 1995. (Northern Michigan University, 1990, p. 9)

Institutions like NMU, located in a rural area with less than four percent non-Anglo population and at least six hours from an major urban area, are not generally attractive to candidates who are accustomed to living in metropolitan areas that have large concentrations of people of their culture or race and have the amenities they desire. It is challenging living in a community that does not have a network that supports your cultural or racial identity, especially if you have a family. Universities need to establish support networks for faculty of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, both within the university and the community in order to be successful in attracting and retaining such faculty.

In the university, this support can take the form of salary, housing, relocation expenses, rank, privileges and other faculty benefits. However, as important as these practical expressions of regard are, they are not sufficient to retain faculty. There needs to be a supportive and accepting climate in the university and community. This commitment to diversity and human dignity must be communicated by all individuals in the university, from the top to the bottom.

Mentoring is important to successful support of new faculty and can be especially valuable to new faculty from underrepresented groups. The major problems of a "minority" feeling welcome are generally very subtle or unconscious. Some apparently good-hearted attempts to help are insincere, patronizing or condescending. Overcoming these problems will require effort, tact, wisdom, patience and sincerity on the part of the institution and the



individual.

Similarly, there must be some support and acceptance in the community in which the faculty members live for them to continue to want to live there. If they are insulted, ignored or do not feel "at home", they are less likely to stay there, even if they are happy in the university. The community becomes a more important factor when the faculty member has a family. If the spouse and children are not accepted in the community, the pressure on the faculty member to move to a more humane environment is increased. The university should take some initiative to develop cultural sensitivity in the community so that faculty and students of diverse backgrounds will feel comfortable living there.

Failing to attract suitable candidates, an interim plan is to bring faculty to campus on a limited term basis. This could be a summer or one year arrangement that might lead to a more long term commitment.

Obviously, innovative and proactive ways must be found to increase the pool of racially and culturally diverse faculty members. This is most generally done through scholarship or other assistance programs. Often the universities who have the hardest time attracting and retaining diversity do not have doctoral programs to prepare such candidates. NMU is in this situation. Along with other Michigan postsecondary educational institutions, NMU has participated in the state sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr.-Cesar Chavez-Rosa Parks fellowship/scholarship program for underrepresented minority students in an academic field of study who agreed to work on advanced degrees and pursue an academic career in a Michigan postsecondary educational institution. (State funding for this program has recently been eliminated.) Similar arrangements can be made by individual institutions or consortiums of universities or teacher education programs.

Recognizing the limitations of hiring and retaining faculty of diverse backgrounds, something must be done with the current faculty to develop a multicultural and global perspective. Multicultural education is an ongoing topic of discussion in faculty meetings and its infusion into the program is considered by the various committees in the NMU Professional Education Unit. The faculty need to develop their cultural awareness and sensitivity so that they can address bias in their own classroom and model strategies for multicultural classes and adapting teaching to learning styles. In-service sessions, colloquia, summer institutes, or seminars could include identification of culture-biased attitudes and behavior in themselves and educational methods and strategies that work to combat such bias. Faculty must first recognize cultural differences, secondly, acknowledge those differences and then value those differences. When new faculty are hired, a special effort should be made to make certain they possess a multicultural and global perspective.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education institutions are not yet well prepared for engendering multicultural and global perspectives in their students. They will have to change to be able to help meet this important need. This represents one of the greatest challenges facing our schools of education.

If educational institutions are to accomplish this transformation, they



must undergo a serious restructuring and renewal of their missions and programs. If teachers of the future are to guide us in this process, they must clearly understand the moral and ethical requirements of a multicultural and global society. Much is known about these requirements, but not enough is taught in our schools of education.

When students from diverse cultures enter school, they are challenged not only by the academic tasks, but also by the school culture. They must master both. Teachers must have a knowledge and experiential base that will assist their students in successfully overcoming both barriers.

Schools and colleges of education must provide leadership by changing what is taught, how it is taught, and the degree to which it is taught. A change in the ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, and doing by both teacher educators and the students who are preparing to be teachers of the future is necessary if meaningful and lasting change is to occur.

Establishing a multicultural and global perspective will require students to eliminate their prejudices towards other peoples irrespective of their culture, nationality, race, class, or other differences. This knowledge base can be directly addressed in the arts, foreign languages, anthropology, sociology, psychology, physiology, and other human sciences, but the entire curriculum needs to reflect a cultural sensitivity.

Teacher training should reflect the diversity of society, as well as help our students learn to appreciate and use that diversity to everyone's mutual benefit. A human ecology must be found in which the genders, classes, nationalities, religions, and other uniqueness that characterize humanity may be unified in a way that is mutually enriching to all. The debate about multicultural and global perspectives has attracted national attention, both within and without teacher training institutions, and has engendered some heated debate. Whether we like it or not, we are in a multicultural nation within an ever-shrinking world and have to confront the needs of our time.

The solutions the world requires must go beyond the pragmatic and superficial ideas that are current amongst leaders of thought and politicians, to the deep abiding principles upon which human values are based and human institutions are directed. Teachers that are now being trained in colleges of education are going to play a key role in aiding humanity to develop these principles. Unless these teachers are given an appreciation of the diversity of human values and expressions, then they will be unable to impart these attitudes that form the foundation of our new world.



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